DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 776 IR 050 371

AUTHOR Wall, Celia J.
TITLE Online Database Retrieval Service: A Statement of Policy.
INSTITUTION Murray State Univ., Ky.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 16p.
PUB TYPE Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Libraries; Guidelines; Higher Education; *Librarians; Library Administration; *Library Services; Occupational Information; *Online Systems; Position Papers; Recordkeeping; *Reference Services
IDENTIFIERS *Library Procedures; *Murray State University KY; User Fees

ABSTRACT

Based partly on an online policy manual developed at the University of Houston, this policy statement for the Online Database Retrieval Service (ODRS) at Murray State University, Kentucky, provides guidelines for the librarian administering the service and for librarians conducting online searches. Eleven sections cover: (1) a statement of purpose for ODRS; (2) hours of operation; (3) patrons served; (4) user fees; (5) the responsibilities of searchers; (6) presearch interview procedures; (7) instructions to discourage patron presence during searches and to choose search times which minimize costs, as well as guidelines for retaining search printouts, computing search costs, compiling search logs, obtaining payment for searches, delivering search results to patrons, and instructing patrons in how to use search results; (8) the responsibilities of the online services librarian, including compilation of service and financial statistics, liaison and contact with vendors, equipment maintenance and repair, requests for funds to supplement user charges, publicity for online services, supervision of paper flow and daily operations, maintenance of search quality, and implementation of any necessary changes; (9) methods for dealing with complaints; (10) library accounting policy; and (11) methods of policy approval and change. A brief description of the development of this policy statement is also provided. (ESR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED234776

Online Database Retrieval Service: A Statement of Policy

by

Celia J. Wall

IR053871

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Celia J. Wall

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Online Database Retrieval Service: A Statement of Policy

by

Celia J. Wall

The Online Database Retrieval Service at Murray State University began operation on July 1, 1982. During the planning stage it was decided that a policy statement should be written, approved, and in force before the Online Service began operation.

A search of the literature revealed three sources which were very helpful and which served as guides in the writing of the policy statement. These sources are listed below.

Computer Search Service Group. Policy Manual. Arlington, VA: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, June 1977. ED 144 557. (Online policy manual, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, University Library)

Jackson, William J. Policy Manual for a Computerized Search Service in an Academic Library. Arlington, VA: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, March 1979. ED 174 221. (Online policy manual, University of Houston, University Libraries)

Pensyl, Mary E. "The Online Policy Manual . . . A Document That Few Have, But Many Can Benefit From (Especially Librarians)," Online, 6:46-49, May 1982.

The policy manual from the University of Houston actually served as the model for the first draft; some parts were used verbatim.

As might be expected, however, changes and additions were necessary to make the finished document relevant to Murray State's individual situation and its specific needs.

The writing of this policy statement took a great deal of time, even using the Houston manual as a guide. As we near the end of our first year of operation, however, we feel the time was well spent. Only one change has been made in the ODRS's Policy Statement. That change was an addition (X.C.) necessitated by requests from several faculty to charge online searches to their departmental library book budgets.

The publication of this policy statement hopefully will give librarians and others involved in the establishment and management of online search services one more model which they can use when writing their own online policy statements.

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

ONLINE DATABASE RETRIEVAL SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT

I. Statement of purpose

The Online Database Retrieval Service supports the research efforts of the students, faculty, and staff of Murray State University.

II. Hours of operation

The Online Service is in operation from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

III. Patrons served

A. All faculty, enrolled students, and staff of Murray State University are eligible for services.

1. Should the question of eligibility arise, the burden of proof shall be upon the patron wanting to be served.

2. Special consideration will be given to the Murray State student working on a thesis or other research project who is temporarily not enrolled (e.g. during the summer). Where there is any question of eligibility, the Online Services Librarian will make the decision as to whether the patron will be served or not.

B. Alumni and courtesy card holders (including AMSUL members) are eligible to have searches done. Fees charged will be based upon the user's status as outlined in IV.B. Category of Users.

C. Non-university people are eligible to have searches done. Fees charged will be based upon the user's status as outlined in IV.B. Category of Users. Preference will be given to Murray State University faculty, students, and staff should a conflict arise.

IV. Cost

A. All direct costs (computer connect time, telecommunication charges, printing charges) will be charged to the person requesting the search.

In addition, a surcharge will be added. This surcharge will depend upon the user's status (see IV.B.) at the time the search is run.

B. The categories of users and the fees they will be charged are:

1. MSU Students (undergraduate and graduate)--actual cost of the search plus 10 percent (not to be less than $1.00).
2. MSU Faculty and Staff--actual cost of the search plus 25 percent when the search is being paid for by a grant or departmental funds; actual cost of the search plus 10 percent if paid out-of-pocket.
3. Other Academic Users (faculty/students from another academic institution)--actual cost of the search plus 30 percent.
4. External Non-Profit Users--actual cost of the search plus 50 percent.
5. External For-Profit Users (e.g. businesses, corporations)--actual cost of the search plus 75 percent.

C. Searches may be paid for by check or money order or by inter-account transfer if the patron wants to charge the search to a department or grant account. Cash will not be accepted as payment for a search. The patron is to be made aware of this before the search is run. (See the Procedures Manual for procedures for collecting payments.)

D. Financial obligation

1. Patrons are financially responsible for all charges and fees for the service requested even when no "hits" are produced. The patron is to be informed of this policy before the search is run.
2. If a patron charges a search to a department and the department refuses to pay, then the patron is responsible for all charges.

V. Searchers

A. Only those librarians designated by the Dean of Libraries as searchers

and trained in the use of the terminal and the system(s) being used shall be responsible for running searches.

B. Responsibilities of searchers

1. Searchers are members of the library staff who have been trained in the techniques of using one or more online database systems. It is the searcher's responsibility to keep informed of the latest developments and new techniques for effective searching by reading the bulletins issued by various database vendors as well as through the reading of professional literature. Periodic review of the search manuals and guides is recommended, particularly for searchers who search less than weekly.

2. It is the responsibilty of the individual searcher to initiate requests to attend workshops and to make all necessary arrangements. Request for action to attend workshops should be addressed to the Dean of Libraries.

3. Searchers are encouraged to consult with other seachers should problems arise or be anticipated with a search strategy or with online techniques.

VI. Scheduling of appointments and the interview

A. Patrons seeking detailed information about the search service will be referred to an appropriate searcher, depending upon the subject of interest. The searcher will arrange a convenient time to meet with the patron. During the interview, the searcher and the patron will discuss the problem to be researched, possible keywords to be used, search limitations, appropriate database(s), etc.
Following this meeting the searcher will prepare the search strategy and decide upon a time to run the search. Searches should be run within 24 hours of receipt of the request if at all possible.

B. An online search request form must be filled out by the requesting patron prior to the interview. The searcher will consult with the patron in filling out the form as fully as posssible. It is the searcher's responsibility to make sure the patron signs the form before the search is run.

C. Search interviews should normally be done on an appointment basis. However, searchers may elect to do a search for someone without an appointment. This will be completely at the searcher's discretion in each case. It is strongly recommended that this practice not be encouraged.

D. Searchers should anticipate problems which may arise online and discuss these fully with the patron before doing the search. Such problems should include the possible need to narrow, broaden, or otherwise modify the strategy, the number and format of the citations to be printed, cost limitations on the search, etc.

E. Searchers will discuss the procedure for payment before the online search is begun. The patron should be made completely aware of the financial obligation involved.

F. The searcher should advise patrons when a search can be easily and economically conducted manually. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce a patron to the printed resources available.

G. It is strongly suggested that the search interview be done in person rather than by telephone. However, it is conceivable that a person requesting a search may reside outside the Murray-Calloway County area, e.g. a faculty member from Paducah Community College. Therefore, searchers may conduct interviews by telephone preferably with completed search form in hand. The decision to accept telephoned searches is left to the discretion of the individual searcher.

VII. The Search

A. As a general rule the presence of the patron during the search should be discouraged. However, the final decision on this is left up to the individual searcher.

B. In deciding when to do a search, the searcher should consider factors which may affect cost, e.g computer response time, interruptions, failure to prepare. Searchers should take whatever actions are possible to control costs.

C. The patron is to be given only the bibliographic citations, not the entire search printout. This is true whether the citations are printed online or offline. The search printout should be turned over to the Online Services Librarian, to be kept on file in the Online Office.

D. Cost computation and the search log.

1. If the patron is present at the time of the search and the search is completed, the searcher is responsible for computing the costs of the search, collecting payment, and filling out the search log. (Each of these activities is described in the Procedures Manual.)

2. If the patron is not present at the time of the search or the search is not completed (e.g. offline prints are ordered), the searcher should fill out the log as directed in the Procedures Manual and give the search printout to the Online Services Librarian. The librarian will then be responsible for computing the cost, completing the search log, and making arrangements for delivery of the search to the patron.

3. The searcher should fill out the search log as soon after completion of the search as possible.

E. Patron payment should be made when all work is completed.

1. Methods of making payment are listed in the Procedures Manual.

2. Payment should be made at the time of the search if the search is completed with the patron present.

   a. If the search is completed to the point that the patron need not return (e.g. no offline prints are requested), then the searcher is responsible for collecting payment for the search.

   b. Searches may be paid for by check or money order or they may be charged to a departmental or grant account. Cash will not be accepted.

   c. The searcher is totally responsible for assuring that full and accurate payment has been made or that the charge process has been explained if all work is completed and the patron is not expected to return again.

3. Delayed Payment

   a. Searches falling into this category are those for which an offline printout has been ordered, a search of an offline file has been requested, an SDI search, or a search which has been done with the patron absent. The common characteristic of all these cases is that the patron will return at a future time to retrieve the results and make payment. Any search which includes offline printout or searching will be included in this category, even if some online results are given to the patron.

4. Mailed out searches

   a. Searches may be mailed to patrons who find it difficult to visit the library during the operating hours of the Online Service. This applies primarily to persons living outside the Murray-Calloway County area.

   b. Payment should be received before the search is mailed. Any exceptions to this policy must be cleared through the Online

Services Librarian. If this is the case, a letter authorizing and approving charges and payment, signed by the requester, must be on file. This should be accompanied by a billing address and purchase order number if necessary.

c. Collection problems connected with mail searches are the responsibility of the Online Librarian.

E. User Instructions

1. After a search is done, the searcher is responsible for making sure the patron will be able to read and use the results. If the results of the search are printed online the searcher should explain the printout before the patron leaves. If the patron is to return later to pick up the search results, the searcher should encourage the patron to telephone or come by the office should there be any questions in using the information.

2. The patron should be encouraged to ask for additional searches or bibliographic help if it is needed. The searcher should inquire as to whether the patron is aware of other useful resources available in the field being researched. Additional instruction should be given when warranted.

G. Pick-up of searches

1. Patrons should be encouraged to pick up and pay for search results during the operating hours of the Online Service, 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

2. If an exception needs to be made, the searcher should notify the Online Services Librarian.

VIII. Responsibilities of the Online Services Librarian

A. Statistics--service

1. The Online Librarian will compile service statistical reports on

a monthly basis. Statistics reported will include but not be limited to:

a. Number of searches performed in each database.

b. Number of searches performed by status (faculty, graduate student, etc.)

2. These statistical reports will be sent to the Head of the Reference Department and the Dean of Libraries.

B. Statistics--financial

1. The Online Librarian will compile financial statistical reports on a monthly basis. Statistics reported will include but not be limited to:

a. Sources of asset debits

(1) Revenue from fees based on connect time charges

(2) Revenue from surcharge fees

(3) Revenue from discounts received from vendors

b. Sources of asset credits

(1) Expenses for connect time charges

(2) Expenses for operation, including terminal repairs, search aids, training, etc.

(3) Expenses for printing and other publicity

(4) Expenses for costs written off

(a) Bad debts expense

(b) Bad search for which the patron is not charged

c. Balances in any accounts (if such accounts are established and budgeted) for equipment, repair, training, etc.

2. These financial reports will be sent to the Head of the Reference Department and the Dean of Libraries.

C. Liaison and contact

1. The Online Librarian is the person who conducts all business, arranges all agreements and contracts and resolves all problems with database vendors.
2. The Online Librarian circulates new information about the database systems and keeps searchers informed of all changes in procedures or other matters.
3. The Online Librarian keeps all information necessary for smooth operation up-to-date, e.g. maintains a list of all databases available with the current prices.

D. The Online Librarian is responsible for arranging any repairs or maintenance to the terminal and other equipment. The library business office will assist the librarian with the necessary vouchers.

E. The Online Librarian will request funds to be used for subsidies, equipment, training, demonstration, or any other activity for which it might be deemed desirable not to charge patrons.

F. The Online Librarian will be responsible for publicizing the service in order to make those who might benefit from it fully aware of its existence. Such publicity might include flyers, posters, newspaper articles or advertisement, or demonstrations for selected users.

G. Supervision of paper flow and daily operations

1. The Online Librarian will design all forms necessary to make the operation of the service as smooth as possible.
2. The Online Librarian will work with the library bookkeeper to organize a logical method of record keeping which will produce the statistical and financial information with a minimum of difficulty.
3. The Online Librarian will receive all offline prints, verify the accuracy of the prints for delivery, and arrange for their delivery

to patrons.

4. The Online Librarian will handle patron complaints and inquiries, e.g. about an overdue offline print.
5. The Online Librarian will pursue overdue accounts by whatever means are available and will act to prevent anyone who does not pay for a search from receiving additional service.
6. The Online Librarian will maintain all files and records pertaining to the operation of the service.
7. The Online Librarian will assure that all needed supplies are ordered.
8. The Online Librarian has final responsibility for all daily operations, including the accuracy of search costs computations.

H. Maintenance of searching quality

1. If the Online Librarian determines that an individual searcher consistently performs badly, he/she may recommend that the searcher be permanently prohibited from further searching. Destructive negative publicity resulting from poor searching must be prevented.
2. The Online Librarian will recommend any changes in equipment and implement any changes in procedures necessary to maintain searching quality.
3. The Online Librarian will arrange and plan all workshops and training sessions which are to be held in-house.

I. The Online Librarian will recommend and/or implement any changes necessary in personnel, policy, equipment or procedures to assure the overall success of the service.

IX. Complaints

A. Searchers should be especially diligent to explain to patrons those policies which have the potential for causing problems. Several of

these are listed here:

1. Patrons are financially responsible for all charges and fees for searches even when no "hits" are produced (IV.D.1.).
2. Cash will not be accepted in payment for searches (IV.C.).
3. If a patron charges a search to a department and the department refuses to pay, the patron is responsible for all charges.
4. The search must be paid for or arrangements for charges to grants or department accounts made before search results will be given to the patron (IV.D.2.).
5. Searches must be picked up between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.
6. The hours of operation of the Online Service are 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (II).

B. If search results are unsatisfactory because of a failure on the part of the searcher to understand what was requested, the user will not be charged for the search. In such a case, the library will absorb the cost of the search.

C. If search costs are higher than they should be because of an obvious mistake on the part of the searcher, the Online Librarian will attempt to compensate for this mistake by lowering the charge for the search as appropriate.

D. If search results are unsatisfactory because of a failure on the part of the patron to explain what he wants, the user will be responsible for all costs and fees.

X. Library Accounting Policy

A. Deposits of payments for online services are to be made daily in the library accounting office to conform with the approved university policy.

B. Interaccount charges are to be submitted monthly to library accounting. Searches cannot be charged to departmental library book budgets.

XI. Policy approval and change

A. This policy will go into effect when approved by the Online Sub-Committee and the Dean of Libraries.

B. Questions arising about the policy which are not covered by this written service policy will be referred to the Online Services Librarian and subsequently added to the policy statement.

C. All changes will be discussed with the Online Sub-Committee before being added to the policy statement.

D. Searchers will be notified of all changes in the policy statement before the changes are initiated.